NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS BUILDING STRONG®

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Corps, Kalispel studying if dam operations can cool downstream waters

SEATTLE – In an effort to improve water temperature for threatened bull trout and other aquatic species, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, and the Kalispel Tribe of Indians are studying the effects of Albeni Falls Dam operations on downstream water temperatures.

Corps scientists are currently evaluating data and refining models to assess relationships between possible operational adjustments and downstream water temperature. In the future, a post-Labor Day experimental release from the dam may be scheduled to assess its effects on water temperature. A date for an experimental release has not yet been set and may not occur in 2013.

While the Corps is also working to understanding the potential effects of a pre-Labor Day release to benefit native fishes downstream of the dam, there are no current plans for consideration of pre-Labor Day releases, or to initiate processes associated with it.

Implementing an altered operation before Labor Day – should it be considered in the future – would require additional analysis to ensure that a pre-Labor Day release would also be consistent with applicable statutes and regulations, such as the Corps' responsibilities under NEPA and ESA, and would involve additional public input. A pre-Labor Day drawdown will not occur in 2013.

The water temperature study is focused on late summer operations in August and September when river temperatures can be lethal for some aquatic species, particularly ESA-listed bull trout and native westslope cutthroat trout. This study is also part of the July 11, 2012, Memorandum of Agreement between the Kalispel Tribe, Bonneville Power Administration, Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps.

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